GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2859
ANSWERED ON:19.03.2008
REPLANTATION OF PRECIOUS TREES
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment was made on the damages caused to the environment in urban areas due to the felling of huge number of trees for developmental projects such as roads, flyovers and major buildings, mining, irrigation etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of the forest area lost due to these projects;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to chalk out a definite policy regarding replanting of precious trees felled for the developmental projects in urban areas of the country; and

(d) if so, the details and the specific steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):

(a): The urban areas in the county has a population of 27.8%. It would be practically not possible to assess the environmental damages/changes that are occurring within these areas precisely due to various developmental activities that are being undertaken therein.

(b) : As per the report titled "State of Forest Report, 2005" by Forest Survey of India, released recently, a comparison of forest covers of the country between the present and preceding assessment (2003) shows that there is a marginal loss of 728 sq km during the period 2002-2004. Hence, there has been no major change in the forest cover in the country.

(c) & (d) : All major developmental projects that are listed in the schedule to the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 attract the provisions of the said Notification. If felling of trees is essential for implementation of any developmental projects being considered for grant of environmental clearance (EC) under the notification in non forest areas, generally, plantation of trees at the minimum ratio of 1:2 is prescribed in the environmental clearance. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 also provides for compensatory afforestation over equivalent non forestland or double the degraded forest area to mitigate the loss of forestland for non forestry purpose.